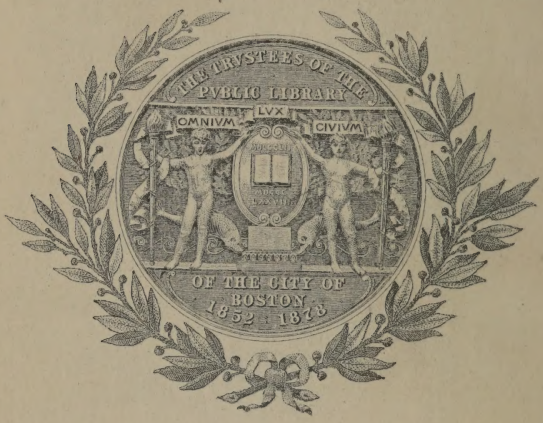
BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 9999 08632 659 0

No. 7551.364


THE TRUSTEES OF THE
PUBLIC LIBRARY
OMNIVM
LVX
CIVIVM
OF THE CITY OF
BOSTON
1852 1878

20
Ke

A

SERMON

DELIVERED AT THE

INSTALLATION

OF THE

7551.36

REV. HORACE HOLLEY,

TO THE

PASTORAL CARE

OF THE

CHURCH AND SOCIETY IN HOLLIS STREET, BOSTON.

MARCH 8, 1809.

BY JOSEPH ECKLEY, D. D.

SENIOR MINISTER OF THE OLD SOUTH CHURCH, IN BOSTON.

BOSTON.

PRINTED BY J. BELCHER, STATE STREET.

1809.

Trans 4392.77
Apr 30, 1875
177059

7551.364

SERMON.

HEBREWS xii. 17.

THEY WATCH FOR YOUR SOULS.

It was said by our Saviour to his disciples, "What is a man profited if he shall gain the "whole world, and lose his own soul? or what "shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"—If there were no other passage in the sacred writings to mark the importance of the subject now to be discussed, *this* would be sufficient. Standing in this place in the character of a christian minister, in whom a solicitude for the welfare of souls, may justly be expected, I enter on the business assigned me, with the most sensible emotions.—There are no sentiments which I can offer to this assembly in general—to my brethren in the ministry in particular, or to my brother the pastor elect of this church, but I am sensible require previously to be applied to my own heart. On this occasion, my wish is to consider myself as *spoken to*, whilst *I speak*—to

mingle, as it were, my own soul, with the great number of souls in this assembly—to weigh with deliberation what may be uttered by my lips, whilst I attempt to urge its importance on the minds of those who hear me.

The text contains a plain, yet interesting declaration of the Apostle PAUL to the Hebrews, respecting his brethren who served with him in the ministration of the gospel of CHRIST. The same should apply to all succeeding ministers in all ages of the world. Concerning those who are faithful, there can be no hesitancy in affirming, that in the sense of the sacred writer, they really watch for the souls of those unto whom they officiate.

In my attempts to fulfil what may be expected at this time, indulge me with your serious attention, whilst, in the first place, I make some remarks respecting the human soul: Secondly, on the duty of watching for souls: Afterward, on the urgent motives to the discharge of this duty: And lastly, on the obligations of the people attendant on this ministry.

FIRST—as to the human soul:—Its nature—its moral qualities—its future prospects and

immortality, severally present themselves as the subjects of our attention. The soul of man is *intellectual.* By daily experience, we perfectly know what it is to entertain ideas, and to *think.* In this kind of activity, we are engaged *now.*

The degrees of intelligence are different in different minds. There are many who live in the world in such a manner, as if the desire were rather to degrade, than to ennoble the faculties of their souls. It is however the will of GOD, and inseparable from the disposition of things under his moral government, that a rational being, once introduced into the intellectual system, should, in time, attain such vast enlargement of his mental powers, as is beyond the measure of any human calculation. Probably not one of us occupying these seats, or worshiping within these walls, but shall hereafter equal, or perhaps exceed in strength, the *present faculties* of the highest seraph that shines in glory near the throne of GOD.

The soul of man is *moral,* no less than *intellectual.* In the New Testament, from which the information essential to every gospel minister is principally derived, man is described

as a sinner ; and sin exhibited as a most formidable distemper, prevailing universally in the world, from the fall in Paradise, to the present time. Its wages is death. Of the execution, we are witnesses every day. Like our first parents, of *some* forbidden fruit we have all partaken. No *tree of life* has invited our approach as a remedy for the disorder. With *Eden*, it lost its place on earth, when by the cherubim it was transplanted in a more prosperous and abiding soil. Each time we visit the grave, *corruption* which is our *father*, and the *worm* which is our *mother* and *sister*, read us a lecture concerning the human soul, which more splendid orators might find difficult to excel, no less in substance than effect. The creation groaneth, and traveleth in pain, even now. Its groans and its pains, whilst they exist as the *consequences*, are in like manner the *proofs* of sin.

Contemplate the human mind in the various appearances which its disorder has produced in the private and public communities of men. If we were sinless, there would be no strife. The world in which we live, would be a sort of appendage to heaven. We should only wait the commission, and be successively conveyed in joyful companies to

the Paradise above.—But what a reverse of scenes! Man, who is formed for the most noble and generous arts—with his countenance erect, as the lord of this lower creation —man, by his sin, has become an enemy to his fellow man. Instead of the joyful songs of peace—the sweet and melodious accents of sympathetic love, how often are we discomposed by the jarring sounds of fierce ambition, and of cruel hate! A gloom has also extended itself over all human affairs. Even the necessary implements of life, have changed their destination—the ploughshare being converted into the sword, and the pruninghook into the spear.—Could we be transported across the ocean washing our still peaceful, as it does the disturbed European shore, our ears might this moment be assailed by the thundering peals of the destroying cannon, and our eyes grow dim through agony at the spectacle of thousands, and ten thousands of our fellow beings just fallen and slain.

As an evidence of what exists in the human soul, shall I now speak of *eternal death*? What weight is given to the ministerial office by the idea of eternity! But is it possible that a human soul can be lost forever? To decide on this inquiry, contemplate among

other passages in the sacred writings, the description of the last judgment, by the Evangelist MATTHEW; and let the doctrine be fairly tried by the predicted language of the Judge himself.

I know that there are many who think it to be irreconcilable with any just ideas of the mercy and compassion of an infinite GOD. In much reliance on your candour, and considering the duty to be prescribed by the *text*, permit me to suggest a few thoughts on this interesting subject. If the doctrine stand on *scriptural evidence*, it must also be conformable to the *antecedent* and *absolute fitness of things*. If it be a truth of *revealed religion*, it must be reconcilable in like manner to the *religion of nature*. The argument commonly brought against it from the *benevolence of God*, appears, in my view, to be incompetent to the support of its own design. It leaves its advocate with the very difficulty he would attempt to solve. For nearly six thousand years, this world which we inhabit, has exhibited a great degree of misery. But has not this occurred, with the free consent of a benevolent GOD ?—That the object of the divine mind is the greatest possible good of the intelligent system, I think there can

be no doubt. Calculating on the promise of the millenium, when all the people will be righteous, it seems evident likewise that *many more* of the inhabitants of the earth, will be *redeemed* than *lost*. But that after any given season, nothing should exist in the system, except pure felicity and tranquil repose—no beings but will be united in similar thoughts, enjoyments and pursuits, may reasonably be questioned, not only on scriptural, but philosophical principles.—In the *natural world*, an uninterrupted summer of sunshine, would, on the whole, be less grateful than for the heavens, at times, to be covered with clouds—the "lightning of thunder" to send forth its streams, and the wild tempest beat. A *calm and peaceful ocean*, with a surface smooth as glass, is a delightful object. But if the wind should never pass upon its bosom and excite the waves, its *waters* might loose the fineness of their transparency, and the *surface* cease to reflect the splendour of the sky.—However exalted the condition of Christians may be in heaven, it is to be remembered that for their felicity, they will be greatly indebted to *mental improvement*, and that this improvement will be through *means*. Who then can say that, as in the *natural*, so in the *intellectual* and *moral world*, something may

not always be required to *arouse* as well as *charm*—to *stimulate* no less than *please?*—*means* which will occasion the excitement of constant wonder and inquiry—give rise to the displays of the divine perfections in every possible mode, and thus produce a continual advancement in knowledge and virtue.—Surely, it must be hazardous to stake the prospect of eternity on the single belief that GOD is good and gracious. On the contrary, must it not be safe to acknowledge, that he who rejects the gospel of JESUS CHRIST shall not see life, but the anger of GOD shall abide upon him?

We will now leave this affecting subject. In contemplating the human soul, think of its capacity for salvation;—its disorders assuaged—its passions changed—repentance rising—the heart of stone becoming a heart of flesh—faith pressing to the cross of JESUS—redeeming love the object of ineffable delight, and the gospel, the power and wisdom of GOD for eternity.

It was proposed under the second head of the discourse, to consider what is implied in watching for souls. A delineation of all the duties of a christian minister—of the

various feelings of his heart, or the most promising course of his service, will not be expected. It may be needful to premise that he who engages to watch for souls with the hope of success, must be previously acquainted with their condition—convinced of their value—apprised of the consequences of their gain or loss—animated with the desire of their interest—possessing a zeal also to be instant in season and out of season in the discharge of the important trust.

These are some of the prerequisites even to the *choice* of the sacred function ; in the prosecution of which, the good minister will be sedulous to secure a reputation for the moral purity of his own heart and life, as essential in every part of his private or public labours.

He will also add the most serious desire that his own mind be furnished with such a degree of theological knowledge as may enable him to impart its treasures to others. By assiduous application in his *study*, he will seek to be "a scribe who is well instructed—"able and apt to teach, and rightly divide "the word of truth."

Go now, in idea with the christian minister, to the consecrated place of his public service On the first day of the week, commemorative of the time when the Son of God by his mandate brought light out of the darkness which then brooded on the face of the deep—when the same divine being burst asunder the bars of death, and from the gloomy sepulchre was announced to the disciples to have risen victorious—on this day, the doors of the sanctuary being opened, and the people walking in willing companies to their accustomed seats, you will have a specimen of what it is to watch for souls, when from the heart of the speaker devoted to God, your hearts are addressed concerning Christ and the salvation of the gospel.

The word *gospel* signifies *good news*. From whence derived—for what purposes—through whose exertions, and in what manner to be applied, are subjects which the minister of religion will treat distinctively, that the system of christianity may be known and exalted by the hearers above every other. Addresses from heaven are made to men in a variety of ways. God speaks to the inhabitants of the earth in the stormy wind and thunder. His providence also is a continual

lesson for their instruction—and by *death*, which universally prevails, the language of the creator is, in a high degree, significant and impressive. But in the gospel, he speaks, by his Son, on more momentous points. The holiness of the divine character—the condition and danger of the sinner ere he be reconciled to GOD—the necessity of religion begun and maintained in the heart through the word and spirit of the almighty—free pardon to the penitent—justification by faith through the mediation—hell escaped—heaven opened—life, glory, and immortality insured to the christian, are doctrines on which the inspired apostles greatly enlarged, and which seem, on this account, to offer themselves to the particular attention of those whose businsss it is to watch for immortal souls.

Should I not trespass too much on your time, I would exhibit the christian minister in the private families of his charge, still with the view of seeking the best interests of their souls. Even in the social circles, religion will not be out of sight. But there is a solemn duty to perform in the chambers of the sick and dying. Fidelity on these occasions is an arduous or an easy acquisition, dependent on

very different circumstances, as they successively occur. The hope of heaven is often indulged by the habitual and impenitent sinner. There are no bands in his death. He trusts in mercy through the mediator, when with the mediator he is as unacquainted as with himself. He would obtain a sort of absolution for his sins by the prayers of the minister, whose ministry he has not regarded before ; and rely on their efficacy as on a passport to eternal life. The truths of revelation, such especially as relate to future death and the judgment, if they were as freely disclosed and pathetically applied as on other occasions, would possibly be too powerful for his debilitated nature : "Desire "might at once fail—the silver cord of life "be immediately loosed—the golden bowl "be instantly broken." This is among the pains which a pious minister must expect to feel. Even *fidelity* in this case will plead for *caution*. But it is caution for the sake of conveying the *most* instruction, in the *safest* and *best* manner. The malefactor, who suffered with JESUS at Calvary, turned himself to the cross, and with animation exclaimed, "LORD "remember me when thou comest into thy "kingdom." It was not too late to offer the petition, or receive the blessing : But before

he offered it, he confessed his sins, and exhibited the proofs of sincere repentance.—Dangerous is it to delay repentance to a dying hour: There is reason to believe, there are very few, at such a season, who are its subjects. But it is the last hope. To the same Saviour who expired on the cross, and with exhortations to the same humility and repentance, which his companion at Calvary experienced before he obtained pardon, the gospel minister will direct the patient of his charge—then offer his petitions for a blessing on the means, and leave his soul with GOD.

In the chamber of the dying christian, the condition is reversed. This is a kind of sanctuary, stationed between two worlds.—Delightful task! to watch the asperations of a mind reconciled by covenant with its GOD, and unfold the glory of redemption, when the redeemer is virtually present in the heart.

How grateful to speak of the mitigation of the terrours of the tomb, where the reply is ready, "It is the place where the LORD lay" —to describe the felicities of heaven, when the soul is on the wing in anticipation of their enjoyment—and to represent the happy meeting with the society of the blessed, when,

the curtains of eternity being drawn aside, the language of the departing saint is, "Come "LORD JESUS—even so, come quickly."—Death is said to be the mighty conqueror of mankind. But this is to conquer even the conqueror—it is to disarm him of his weapons—it is to defy his power—it is to smile, and triumph in battle.

Having thus considered what is implied in the duty of watching for souls, I am, in the third place, to state some of the principal motives by which this duty may be enforced.

FIRST—Clergymen, selected from the class of their fellow-mortals, are the *only* agents appointed for the employment. Some seraphic beings from the realms above might have been chosen for the important service. We might have seen them walking in radiant glory in our churches—have heard the music, and been commanded by the eloquence and energy of their language. But the wise author of our salvation has ordained it otherwise. "We have this treasure in earthen "vessels, that the excellency of the power "may be of GOD," and not of any inferior beings. The argument applies with great force. *They* who are the *only* agents appoint-

ed, in the scheme of providence and plan of grace, to the ministration of the gospel, are consequently under the most solemn obligations to be faithful.

Secondly—It may be said of clergymen that they minister in *Christ's behalf*. This is not by his appointment only, but by their own consent. In addition to the allegiance applicable to true christians in general, they have entered into a solemn covenant with the Redeemer, to devote their talents, and spend their time in his service. In watching for souls, it is to be remembered, it is for the souls of those for whom the Redeemer died. The motives enforcing ministerial fidelity are therefore to be taken from the united considerations of the pains of the cross, and of the benefits they are designed to procure. Among these benefits, is to be mentioned the exalted station to which it appears the redeemed will in future be advanced. "For "the suffering of death, it has pleased the "Father to seat the Son at his own right "hand in heavenly places—to put all things "under his feet, giving him to be head over all "things to the church, which is his body; "that unto principalities and powers might "be known *by the church*, the manifold wis-

" dom of GOD ; according to the eternal pur-
" pose, which he purposed in CHRIST JESUS
" our LORD."

Surely, it is neither enthusiastic nor extravagant to consider the mediation, with the consequent redemption of the saints, as the most important events that will ever occur in the divine government ; intended as the means of exciting the wonder, improvement, and delight of all other good beings, in all worlds, throughout eternity.—Are not these ideas justified by the consideration of the infinite love declared to have been expressed by the Father, in giving the Son to die for the benefit of mankind ; connected with what we are taught concerning the personal and divine attributes of the Son himself, as " the " brightness of the Father's glory, and ex-
" press image of his person ;"—" GOD mani-
" fest in the flesh," for the salvation of the world.

I state these things as only general remarks on this important subject. Reference must be had to the scriptures themselves for their confirmation, which the present time will not allow.—If then the redeemed of the LORD are thus to be exalted—if through

them, the *power*, *wisdom*, and *love* of the Father and Son are so gloriously to be displayed—if their felicity, as the ransomed people of CHRIST, is not only to be celebrated by themselves, but by all good beings through the universe for ever ;—especially, if by the neglect of their ministers, they might have perished without recovery, what momentous arguments are these, in the great business of watching for *souls*, to be faithful as well to *them*, as to *him* who ordained this service in their behalf !

LASTLY—the *high responsibility* of those who are engaged in the christian ministry, is another argument to enforce the duty of fidelity. The apostle introduces this idea in immediate connection with the words of the text. "They watch for your souls," he says, "as those who must give an account."

You will not require the proof, because I am sure you cannot doubt of the reasonableness of this assertion. I shall therefore only observe, "It is required in stewards, that a man be "found faithful." But it is not a requisition only ; it is a *command*, and by *him*, who, as he is able, has chosen to enforce it by *sanctions*.

It may be said of clergymen, that they take their offices with the express condition of being condemned or approved for the manner of the execution, by the master who appointed them. For only an individual to approach the scene of death, who has neglected his own soul, would be a solemn event. If he had the care of others whom he had neglected, the messenger to summon him into the eternal world, must be unwelcome in every possible view.—The pangs attendant on dissolution—still more the horrors annexed to the future judgment, which await the nominal servant of CHRIST, who has been a trifler himself, and has trifled with immortal souls, I wish you to represent to your own minds, for I am unable to describe them.—Something I might say of the shame as well as distress at the tribunal of the Judge—the indignity of those who will be lost through ministerial neglect—the amazement of all good beings—perhaps the scoffs and contempt of the whole class of the wicked among angels and men ;—but the scriptures confine the scene more particularly to the expressions of *his* mind, who, when seated on the throne, will close the business with a sentence decisive and awful—to which the assembly of the *just* will be constrained to add

their *Amen*, because true and righteous is the Judge, and his name to be revered forever.

The doctrine of the reward of the pious and good minister, is a more exhilirating and delightful subject. The reward is at all times with him who serves the LORD. But it will be experienced in a more sensible manner at the season of *death*. Judging from what we read in biographical works—perhaps from what we have *personally witnessed* in the closing part of a *good minister's life*, the reflections resulting from the belief that, though with many imperfections, it has been sincerely devoted to the interest of human souls, must be consoling beyond description.

It is highly probable that the perfect angels, ever delighting to execute the divine will, enjoy the means of an easy and free *access* to the inhabitants of the earth. I will therefore suppose one of these commissioned beings to be present with the faithful minister of JESUS CHRIST, at the interesting moment when *he quits the body*. "Trembling, hoping, ling'ring, flying"—the world receding from his sight—this heavenly visitant he at once descries: With his lovely form he is soon

enraptured, and thus addresses him—"Art thou some guardian angel, sent to conduct a stranger to his destined home? In thy countenance I see the smile of celestial love. O! shew me where the master I have served, dwells. Yet the brightness of his glory may overcome my nature. With thy robe infold me as we rise toward his presence. Lend me that *palm of victory* which thou bearest in thy hand; and that *cross* I see pendant at thy side. Instruct me in the best manner to express my grateful adoration, and to begin some heavenly song."———Illusive vision!—*Heaven*, as a distant world—an abode beyond the sun and stars, has often been contemplated. It is said, that, though swift the progress, the immeasurable tracts of space must all be traversed, ere the object be attained. Thus MILTON wrote. Exalted verses, and heroic bard!—But heaven may be much nearer than we imagine. It may be the *want of faculty—not* the *distance of the place* which precludes us from its immediate knowledge. Suppose an infant to be born blind and deaf, and to continue in this condition to the age of *manhood*. Let the powers of sight and hearing be instantaneously communicated,

The consequence is *not* a *change of place*. But *to you* I submit the inquiry, whether, in many essential points, it be not exactly similar to an *admission* into a *new world*.—*So* it may be with *us*. With certain faculties unknown at present, but communicated as soon as we leave the body, discovery may immediately be made, that *heaven*, at least in part, is *here*. —In the conclusion of these remarks, it may be sufficient to say, that to the christian minister who with fidelity has watched for souls, the consolation is given of reflecting with the apostle, in his last days, that "when absent "from the body, he shall be present with the "LORD."

I proceed now to the *last* head of the discourse, in which it was proposed to shew the duties incumbent on the *people*, who are the recipients of the gospel ministry.

The writer of the text says, "Obey them "that have the rule over you, and submit "yourselves, for they watch for your souls." —Of the authority of christian pastors in the churches, I shall say nothing. The apostles possessed powers which are not communicated to succeeding ministers. I refer you to the Platform of the Congregational Churches,

for whatever is necessary to be observed on this subject. The rules are plain, and appear to me, to be taken in general, from the gospel itself. In New-England, especially in the capital cities, the clergy and laity know not of any disagreement in these matters.

My observations shall particularly relate to that important branch of a people's duty, which is, that they encourage the ministers whom they elect, to be *faithful*. To this end, it is to be considered, that they professedly come to them in the *name*, and by the *commission* of the great head of the church, to preach the gospel as they have received it from *God*, and *not* from *man*—determined, in an *humble* and *sincere* dependence on the assistance of the *holy spirit*, to deliver its truths for the very purpose they were originally intended—neither "teaching for "doctrines, the commandments of men, nor "shunning to declare the whole counsel of "GOD"—"knowing nothing among them," in the rational and true sense of the expression, "but JESUS CHRIST, and him crucified."

As a material part of this service, *they* who belong to the flock of CHRIST, will expect their own faith, hope, and charity to be

confirmed—the anxieties they occasionally suffer, to be relieved, and their minds established by the promises of an unchangeable GOD. The LORD being their Shepherd, who will not suffer them to want, they will require of their ministers to direct them to the green pastures, and lead them beside the still waters—to shew them the path of life, that they may be safely brought to eternal glory.

But the assemblies to which clergymen officiate, are commonly composed of many who have not chosen the ways of eternal life; yet acknowledging the validity and importance of the christian religion, they desire it to be preached, but in such a manner as least of all to disturb them in the indulgence of their earthly pleasures, or in the hope of enjoying GOD and mammon together.

Surely it cannot be doubted that it readily arises out of the natural taste of the sinner to wish that the sanctions of holy writ were relaxed, and the expectation of heaven dependent on a course of *external morality*, rather than on that *radical change of heart*, described by our Saviour to NICODEMUS, producing crucifixion to the world in a spiritual sense, and of which *external morality*, impor-

tant as it is, may be considered to be nothing more than the sign and effect. We read of many of the *Jews* who were so bold as to "say to the Seers, see not; and to the Pro-"phets, prophecy not unto us right things; "speak unto us smooth things; prophecy "deceits; get you out of the way; turn "aside out of the path; cause the Holy One "of Israel to cease from before us." The world is not essentially regenerated at the present time. There is, indeed, too much *wisdom* to allow any part of a religious assembly to address a christian minister in the language used by the Jews. There may still exist a real though dormant inclination to reeeive the gospel after the rudiments of this world—with the enticing words of man's wisdom—or, as the apostle to the Gentiles says, *another gospel* than he had learned, in preference to that which is given from heaven, asserting that without holiness it is impossible to see GOD, and coming in demonstration of the spirit and of power.

For this reason, I discover the signatures of exalted wisdom in those churches, whose members, having themselves been "brought "out of a state of spiritual darkness to mar-"vellous light, and from the dominion of sin,

"to the glorious liberty of the sons of GOD," cast their longing eyes on their ministers, and offer for them their fervent prayers, that they may be the instruments of the salvation of many others—that their children, and those who enter within the temple gates, may, through their labours, be strengthened to see where their help lies—many obdurate sinners be pricked to the heart—led to Calvary—smite their breasts at the foot of the cross—then look up, and with humble and holy rapture exclaim, "Our LORD, and "our GOD."

This is the description of persons to which the minister of the New-Testament is sent no less than to the members of the visible church. It is immediately obvious that in the present sinful world, the business of a clergyman, like that of a physician, is with the *sick*, as often as with the *convalescent*—with the *distempered*, equally as with the *healthy*, and the *lame* as with those who are *sound in every part*. If we prescribe for ourselves—when we want medicine, we ask not for that which is the most palatable, but such as will pervade the system with the best effect. If a limb be mortified, we consent to its amputation, to save the body. How numerous

have been the *patients,* not omitting even those the most delicate in their nature and constitution, who, when yielding to the extraction of some morbid member, have united the *fortitude* with the *prudence* of encouraging the operator to press his lancet to the lowest roots of the disease, though their pains were thereby prolonged.

The same fidelity and care, in treating the disorders of the sinner's mind, are constantly required, as in attention to those which concern the body.—Sin is an enemy which often works its way into the human heart, as into a sort of citadel, in the most *secret* and *insidious* manner. It is an enemy the more dangerous on this account, and if not discovered and destroyed in time, like some mighty giant with his iron mace, will itself become the destroyer of the building by which it is possessed. The means of its destruction must therefore be proportionably *powerful.* The apostles are described as having been furnished, for this employment, with certain weapons, not carnal indeed, yet mighty, to the pulling down of strong holds—reducing the proud imaginations of sinners, and every thing which exalted itself against the knowledge of God. The like instruments

of warfare, for the purpose of conquest as well as defence, are committed to succeeding ministers. In the concerns of human life, it is thought to be a failure when the means selected for the accomplishment of any particular end, are injudiciously chosen, or in themselves are weak. We might compare the efforts of a *preacher*, unprovided with the weapons out of the *gospel armory* for the *reduction of sin*, with the management of a *forrester*, who, bending his course to a *thick wood*, and selecting one of the tallest and sturdiest trees for the purpose of *felling it*, instead of using the *weighty axe*, would begin and carry on the process merely with his *pocket knife*.—Yet in this business, fidelity is often the most arduous, because it is often the most unwelcome part of a minister's duty. Persuasion should certainly dwell on the speaker's lips : Religion should be represented to all hearers alike—amiable in its qualities—reasonable in its requirements, and heavenly in its rewards. The voice of kind intreaty should be heard within the sanctuary, answering the consideration of the rational nature of the doctrines to be delivered, and of the understanding and free agency of those to whom they are to be addreseed.

But this is not the whole of the preacher's service. Sin, in every form, is to be condemned and opposed. Where the invitations from the mercy seat of heaven are ineffectual, the effects of divine justice are to be announced: Death as well as life is to be exhibited: Transgressors are to be shewn the danger of their ways—admonished to lay down the weapons of their rebellion, and bring every thought to the obedience of CHRIST.——In the performance of so momentous a part of duty, how needful is it that a clergyman be supported by those members of his society, who are themselves the professed disciples of the LORD JESUS! How incumbent on them to animate and encourage him, in dependence on the divine spirit, in saving souls from destruction—turning them to righteousness—bringing them as new members into the kingdom of GOD, that united together they may all finally be accepted by the Lamb who has redeemed them with his blood, and serve him in his temple for ever and ever!

I shall now proceed to the usual addresses on this occasion.

MY DEAR BROTHER—

I have but little to say to you, more than has been said already—and this has been said to us all. If a lengthy address would conspire to increase in *your mind*, or in *my own*, those affections which the subject and the season are calculated to beget, I would make it.

Satisfied with your religious character, and acquainted with your qualifications as a gospel minister, you have this day been cordially received among us as a fellow labourer in the vineyard of CHRIST—who, as we charitably hope, will add your unremitted exertions to those of your brethren, in maintaining the glorious faith delivered to the saints, and in promoting the best interest of immortal souls. We congratulate you on the occasion. You are introduced to a wide sphere for usefulness—in connection with a *people* respectable for their numbers, and weighty for their influence. You will be successor of a minister whom they fondly loved—in his *study*, a diligent inquirer for theological truth—in the *pulpit*, an affectionate preacher of the doctrines he maintained—among his *flock*, the serious and exemplary pastor—the instructive and acceptable friend.

Having been ordained before the present time, to the important office of a gospel minister, you will naturally be reminded, my dear sir, of the solemn vows which you then made, and will now renew, in the presence of God.—We implore his blessing to rest upon you.—To the close of an honourable and happy life, spent in the service of the Redeemer, may you be faithful and successful—and having gained many souls as the seals of your ministry, with them, may you be accepted at the coming of the Lord!

MY CHRISTIAN FRIENDS AND BRETHREN OF THIS SOCIETY—

On this day I recollect the time, though more than twenty years have now elapsed, when many of you formed a part of the congregation, and worshiped with the people to whom I yet enjoy the privilege and honour statedly to officiate. On the first floor which was laid on the supporters of this goodly fabrick—the arched heaven for our only canopy, I took the lead in your devotions, and we offered our united prayers to the Almighty Builder of the temple above, for his favour in the erection, and his presence at the future religious services of this his temple below.

By desire of the Ecclesiastical Council, and in the place where I now stand, I gave the usual token of the fellowship of the churches, at the installation of Doctor WEST.——He is gone.—Through the common lapse of time, the funeral rites, which we well remember, are this day succeeded by the joyful occurrences of the present meeting.*

Your kind attentions and generosity to your last departed minister, during a long course of sickness, by which his publick labours were greatly interrupted, whilst they conveyed the sense you entertained of his character and worth, attested also to the respect you bore to the institutions of our holy religion, and to the laws prescribed for its support. It is a pledge of the encouragement on which the gentleman you have now elected as your pastor, may confidently rely. We trust, however, that the encouragement he will receive, will have a primary respect

* On the 20th April, 1787, the *Church in Hollis street* was consumed, owing to a great fire, which destroyed most of the houses in the vicinity. After this time, the members of the society, by invitation, generally assembled, on days of publick worship, at the *Old South Church*. The present edifice was erected in 1788: and the Rev. Dr. SAMUEL WEST installed pastor of the society, the 12th March, 1789.

to the great design of his ministry—that by *your* labours in strengthening *his* labours—your petitions for the constant endowment of his mind in the true spirit of his office, and your expressions of approbation of his uniform endeavours to win souls to CHRIST, he will not only be a crown of joy to *you*, but that your *children*, through his preaching, will rise up and call him blessed.

In a sense, you have elected him as *your* minister. But in a more important sense, it is as the minister of *Christ to you*—his directions to take—his will to deliver, and his institutions to observe. He will be *your* minister in every sense you can desire as christians, whilst he is the *true* minister of JESUS CHRIST. In this case, it will be from the love of your salvation. *Your* interest will be *his* interest. You will share in the first affections of his heart, and have reason to gratulate yourselves in some of the best services of his life.

Brethren—we are engaged, as christians, in one common cause : We have one LORD, one faith, and one baptism. In the Redeemer, let us rejoice—to him be faithful, and through the grace of the gospel, we shall finally meet together in his kingdom.

To the assembly at large, I shall add but a few words. There are now convened in this place, I presume, more than two thousand souls. I consider that by *these*, the other world will shortly be supplied with so many *new* inhabitants. In what condition, is to be known hereafter. With what thrilling joy in the assurance of redemption, or tremulous distress at the discovery of its loss, will be determined by a righteous GOD. Into the *future* world, we cannot fully look. But it is given us by our benignant creator to share in many rich blessings of the *present*. Hope meets us in the gospel as an anchor of our souls, proclaiming that "now is the accepted "time, and now is the day of salvation." Heaven dawns upon our view: Its gates are not shut by day, neither are they shut by night. —Receive the religion of the Son of GOD in gratitude and love, and you will live for ever. Pure are its precepts—divine its promises and rewards. Like some celestial guest, it will be an improving companion in the uneven paths of human life, and the sweetest solace in the season of death. Trusting in this religion, when your tombs shall be thrown open at the trumpet's blast, the sound will not affright you: When the Judge shall take his seat upon the throne, you will see no

terrour in his countenance.—"The heavens "shall pass away with a great noise," but you shall stand unmoved amidst the mighty shock—and being admitted into "the new "heavens and the new earth," you will be for ever with the LORD—to whom be praises everlasting. AMEN.

In the 3d page, read Heb. xiii. 17. for Heb. xii. 17.

THE

CHARGE,

GIVEN BY

REV. JOHN LATHROP, D.D.

INASMUCH as it hath pleased Almighty GOD, to dispose the church of CHRIST, and the religious society who worship in this house, to invite you, reverend sir, to be their pastor, and also to dispose your mind, to accept the invitation ; the associated churches in this vicinity, have assembled this day, by their pastors and delegates, to invoke a divine blessing on you, and the people with whom you are now connected. But by nothing that we do, or that we claim a right to do, would we have it understood, that we confer on you any ministerial powers, which you did not before possess.

As you have heretofore been ordained, we conceive that when you accepted the call of this church, to take the pastoral care of it, you really became its pastor ; and, in conse-

quence of that relation, all ministerial acts which you might have been requested to perform, would have been valid.

But while we are of opinion, that you would have possessed full powers to exercise the duties of a gospel minister among the people who have now called you, although the appropriate acts of a publick installation had been omitted, we conceive many good and valuable purposes may be answered, by observing this ancient custom. A publick and solemn induction to office, it may be supposed, will make a serious impression on the pastor, and the society particularly concerned, and on all who attend the exercises. Men will be led to consider an *office* important, which is filled with so much solemnity. And farther, by the induction of a gospel minister in the way which has been generally observed, he is not only acknowledged as the pastor of the church which called him, but a sort of common relation is expressed ; and all the churches concerned in the solemnity, are considered as having an interest in him, and a claim, at least, to occasional services.

According to the custom, which the churches of our denomination have observ-

ed, when a pastor is publicly inducted, one of the council convened on the occasion, is appointed to remind him of his duties, and give him a charge. This part of the offices of the day, I am directed to perform.

Permit me then, my brother, to say to you, what the apostle PAUL directed to be said to one in his day, "Take heed to the "ministry which thou hast received in the "LORD, that thou fulfil it."

By taking heed to the ministry, it must be supposed that we take heed to the doctrines which we preach; to our conversation, and to the whole of our behaviour in "the "house of GOD, which is the church of the "living GOD." And to fulfil the ministry is to discharge the duties of it with unceasing fidelity, as in the fear of the LORD.

A minister of the gospel is no ordinary character. While we are far from claiming the authority of the apostles, we do, in some sense, act as the ambassadors of CHRIST. We speak in his name; we proclaim his gospel; we let sinners know on what terms they may hope for pardon and acceptance to the favour of GOD. You will therefore "preach

"the word." You will receive the messages of CHRIST as you find them in the New-Testament, and you will faithfully deliver those messages to the people. The New-Testament will be the standard, to which you will resort, as your highest authority. In your preaching you will have frequent allusion to the sacred oracles, and choose rather to *adorn* your compositions with the beauties which you find in the writings of the prophets, the evangelists, and apostles, than show that you are wholly indebted to the Roman and Grecian classicks; although you acknowledge, your taste for polite literature has been formed by *those originals* of purity and elegance.

Such is the importance of the ministry which you have received, that to fulfil it will require all your diligence. You will therefore "Give yourself wholly to it." When your mind is impressed with the importance of your work, you will think you have no time to be idle. You will have no relish for secular employments. You will wish to be altogether occupied in your master's service. It will be your concern to deliver his messages faithfully; you will therefore be careful that you, at no time, deliver the commandments or traditions of men for the doc-

trines of CHRIST. You will propose no other terms or conditions of salvation than you find clearly expressed in the gospel; and *there* you will find them to be no other than *faith*, *repentance*, and a *holy life*.

"Hold fast the form of sound words "which you have received;—in faith and "love which is in CHRIST JESUS."

That you may be able to fulfil the ministry to advantage, you will endeavour to obtain a thorough acquaintance with the holy scriptures. To understand the sacred books, as every faithful minister of JESUS CHRIST will wish to understand them, requires diligent application, extensive research, and critical learning. You will therefore "Give "attendance to reading;" you will "Medi-"tate on these things;" and you will "Con-"tinue in them." Reading alone will not make you *wise* or *learned*; you must think as well as read. To understand the sacred books you will carefully and patiently compare one part with another; and you will not admit an explanation which is evidently inconsistent, either with the perfections of the creator of the world, or the analogy of the holy oracles. But after all the labour which you are

able to bestow, you will find, what the Apostle PETER found in the writings of Saint PAUL, "Some things hard to be understood:" you will find mysteries which you cannot unfold: you will find prophecies which must be *fulfilled*, before they can be understood. Those doctrines which are confessedly mysterious, you will view with religious reverence, and if called at any time to discourse on them, you will give your opinion with diffidence, and in the exercise of great candour towards such of your brethren as may have given opinions different from yours, on the same subjects.

"O man of GOD, be thou an example of "the believers, in word, in conversation, in "charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

One exhortation more, from the many excellent ones given by the Apostle PAUL to christian ministers, I beg leave to mention on this occasion.—Having observed that "the "kingdom of GOD is not meat and drink, but "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the "Holy Ghost," he adds, "Therefore follow "after the things which make for peace."—The master whom we have engaged to serve, is the "Prince of Peace." His kingdom, is a kingdom of peace. His children, are chil-

dren of peace; and we find the scriptures both of the Old and New-Testament are full of exhortations to peace.

I have the pleasure to say to you, my brother, your lot is now fallen in a place where the churches, and the ministers of religion have enjoyed, and still enjoy, great peace. It is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, as a circumstance which called for thankfulness, that "the churches had *rest*: "then had the churches *rest*, throughout Ju- "dea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were "edified."

I can testify from the experience of many years, that the people of this metropolis are remarkable for their love of peace, and for their candour towards each other on religious subjects. I pray God they may long support this character, and that no root of bitterness may spring up to trouble them.

Differences of opinion there are among us, and differences of opinion must be expected; they were in the church, even in the days of the Apostles, and have been in all ages and in all countries, where the christian religion has been tolerated. Where chris-

tians have *agreed* as to the essential doctrines of salvation, they have *disagreed* in their opinions about many things of *minor* importance. Such differences of opinion, as have always been observable among christians, flow from their different capacities to investigate truth, their different advantages and opportunities, their different modes of education, and different habits of thinking, as *necessarily*, and as *certainly* as any effects flow from causes established by the Governour of the world.—A wise man therefore will not say, that he never *will* alter any of his religious opinions. If he has any *mind*, if he allows himself to think at all, he *must* and he *will* alter his opinions, when the providence of God, over which he has no control, puts him in a situation to see things in a light different from what he before saw them.—Vain then will be all attempts to establish perfect uniformity of opinion among christians, or to bind the human mind by the devices which have been formed for that purpose. Men may say what they *now* believe, but no man in his senses will promise, that he will *always* believe exactly the same things.—No man, therefore, who has any knowledge of the human heart, or any regard for the right of private judgment, will attempt to deprive his

brother of that freedom, which God hath given him ; or to fetter his mind with oaths and subscriptions.

In your present situation, my brother, you will have an opportunity to exercise all your talents in the investigation of truth, and in communicating knowledge to others.—There is no part of the world, I believe I may say with safety, and I hope without boasting,—there is no part of the world, where the principles of christian liberty are better understood, or more fully exercised, than in this vicinity.

It is possible indeed, that some may think, our candour is the effect of lukewarmness, and that our peace is little better than the peace of the dead ; but while it is wished, more of the power of religion were visible among us, the *rest*, the *calm* which the churches enjoy, is certainly preferable to the *storms* which have been raised by party bigots, and wild enthusiasts. The peaceful followers of the Son of God, whenever they *can*, will retire from the noise of disputants, and leave those who contend for modes and forms, and for points which have never been settled, to waste their zeal and breath, in abusing one another.

What would our pious ancestors have given for the peace which we enjoy ! To possess christian peace and liberty, they left their native land, and fled to this wilderness. All who love their memory, will cherish the principles of evangelical freedom which they purchased with toils and sufferings.

I know, my brother, you will aid our endeavours to build up the peaceful kingdom of the Son of GOD. While the doctrines you preach will disturb the repose of the wicked, and fill them with apprehension, you will endeavour to promote peace and truth in the church of CHRIST. GOD grant you abundant success ! By the excellency of the doctrines which you preach, and the purity of your life, may you bring many of your fellow creatures to bow, in willing subjection to the Prince of Peace. And thus having turned many to righteousness, GOD grant you may shine as a star, in the firmament above, for ever and ever. AMEN.

THE

RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP.

BY

REV. DR. KIRKLAND.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Love to God and man is the end of the commandment. Christianity stands for this, as a house for its inhabitant. If we have tasted of the word of life, we delight to esteem all who appear estimable, and to serve all within the reach of our influence.

The communion of churches is a sign and effect of christian love. Individual churches are members of one body, parts of one whole. No alienation or opposition should exist between those, who are, in a peculiar sense, the children of one Father; who depend on the same Redeemer, and hope for the same eternal life. If the communion of churches is walking worthy of the christian vocation, that of ministers is more especially becoming: Being fellow-labourers in a common field, and

united in duties, trials, and cares, they should be united in affection. Shall they, who stand by the altar, and who, in the name of the Most High, summon men to the immolation of every selfish and hateful passion, discover a negligent inattention, or a perverse disregard to the rights and feelings of their brethren? Shall they, who constantly approach the well-spring of charity opened in the gospel, be ever justly accused of wanting its benignant spirit in their conduct to one another, and seem to have drunk of the bitter waters of contention?—In every social relation, and most of all in that of companions in office, they may be expected to show a generous, participating, forbearing temper; and be ready in all possible ways to strengthen each other's hands, and encourage one another's hearts.

The harmony of the congregational churches and their pastors, in this metropolis and its vicinity, has been often mentioned by many of the friends of religion with approbation and pleasure. It has been the natural consequence of their gradual adoption of those peaceful maxims in regard to christian communion, which are believed to allow the requisite scope to zeal for purity of

faith and practice, and to the exercise of private judgment and liberty of conscience; whilst at the same time they resist the causes of animosity, discord, and schism. By the ministers of these churches in general, this concord has been esteemed a blessing of great price. We have found it "good and pleasant for brethren to dwell together in unity." It has lightened our labours, and refreshed our spirits; kindled emulation, and promoted improvement. In the services of this day, we behold an exhibition of the principles and spirit which have kept us one body in CHRIST; and witheld us from fixing our attention eagerly and pertinaciously on points in which we might differ, and overlooking the essential articles in which we have been agreed.

That Almighty and merciful Being, with whom is the residue of the spirit, and who in his own time repairs the desolations of his sanctuary, having in his wise providence, called us to unite with this church in giving effect to their choice of a pastor by a solemn installation, it is my pleasing office, DEAR SIR, in the name of the council, to present you this right hand, in token of the near relation in which we mutually stand; being persuaded of thee our brother, that "having now

come in to take a part with us in this ministry ; thou wilt indeed be a fellow worker unto the kingdom of God, a fellow helper unto the truth and a comfort unto us." Receive it as a sign of our reliance on your serious desire and purpose, by divine assistance, to give your best faculties and affections to the sacred work ;—our belief that you will strive to feel more and more the power of religion on your heart and display it in your life ;—and by the light of instruction, the energy of persuasion and force of example, to establish and increase it in others.

Viewing you in this character, we congratulate you on assuming your second ministerial charge in a situation so favourable to the exercise and improvement of your gifts and accomplishments ; and under circumstances so auspicious to your usefulness and comfort. Believe also, that we partake the solemn impressions and tender solicitude which we are sensible you must feel on commencing this important era of your life, and revolving the weight and difficulty of the station to which you are now introduced.—By this token we signify our obligation and readiness to cherish a fraternal interest in your welfare, to cultivate your acquaintance as

opportunity shall permit, and your inclination invite; to afford you counsel and advice in doubts; sympathy and condolence in trials; to be equitable, candid, sincere in all our intercourse; to maintain a delicate regard to your reputation; to countenance all your laudable designs and endeavours to advance the cause, to which we are alike devoted; to remember you in our prayers to the Father of lights and of mercies, and seek a blessing for you out of the house of the LORD.

By this right hand we acknowledge your equality with us in office and privilege. "One is our master even CHRIST, and all we are brethren." Far be it from us to aspire to dominion over your faith; or in any manner willingly discourage your unbiassed inquiries after religious truth, and your meek and candid, yet frank and fearless avowal of your honest opinions. We may not refuse you that right of private judgment, which we claim for ourselves or seek to make you a sufferer for maintaining an inviolable allegiance to your LORD and Judge. It is our duty to promote not obstruct your deference to the solemn injunctions, which say to you and us—"Buy the truth and sell it not—

speak the truth in love;—contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints."

Such, my brother, are some of the expressions of our respect to the connexion now formed, in which we desire not merely not to be deficient, but to abound. The same offices of brotherly love and ministerial fellowship, we presume you consent that we may expect—as we shall constantly need and be happy to receive from you. Go thou forth, my brother, in the strength of the LORD, making mention of his righteousness. And we beseech the LORD to send now prosperity. May he grant you a long and successful ministry, that a people yet to be born may by your manifestation of the truth see the salvation of GOD in all its power and lustre. May the eye that sees you, bless you, and the ear that hears you, bear witness to you. Being faithful unto death, may you receive a crown of life.

DEARLY BELOVED IN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST,

The joy of this day is chastened by the tender recollection of our deceased father and brother, your late pastor, whose prudent, affectionate, and assiduous ministry you highly prized; whose character uniting

many excellencies, you greatly esteemed and loved ; whose long infirmities served at once to engage your sympathy, and illustrate to your edification his principles and hopes, and whose terminated labours and sufferings ; and return to dust, and we trust entrance upon a better life, made the breach, which GOD in his wisdom has now enabled you to supply under pleasing prospects. We beseech you, brethren, to know him, who is now set over you in the LORD, and esteem him highly in love for his works' sake. He has received strong pledges of your regard. Continue your affection and respect. Give him joy and support by your attention and seriousness ; your shining virtues, and excellent lives. So may he deliver and so you receive the kind proposal and gracious message with which he is entrusted, that his labours of duty may be soothed by the evidence of success, that you may find increasing benefit in his services, and he animation and reward in your christian attainments.—" And now, brethren, we commend you to GOD, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them, who are sanctified."